

TOWN OF ACTON
SIDEWALK COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of December 14, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Acton Memorial Library Conference Room

Present: Kate Chung, Leslie Hogan, Dick Calandrella, Steve Evans, Sytske Campbell, Bettina Abe, Dana Snyder-Grant, Pam Cochrane. Selectman John Sonner.

Citizen Concerns:

Melissa Chaffee, 81 Robbins. Spoke about Stow St between Robbins and Martin Street; fast traffic (up to 50mph), no shoulder, lots of truck traffic including gravel trucks. Walking to Jones field from Robbins feels quite unsafe. Wetlands on both sides may complicate sidewalking.

Procedural Matters:

The **November 2011 minutes** were approved. We enjoyed Dana's birthday cake. Note to chairs: ► In the January meeting, poll the committee members as to who, if any, will not be able to attend the February meeting.

SATSAC report from Clare Siska
(South Acton Train Station)

Clare: SATSAC got a small grant from MAPC to study pedestrian and vehicle flow, and recommend any safety measures. Clare will send us a copy of the report when it becomes available. SATSAC is very concerned about the safety of pedestrians, and a lack of sidewalks in the train station area. Train station Construction to start in June, starting with south station on Maple street. Finished Spring 2014. High speed traffic is common on Stow street toward Stow, and seems dangerous to pedestrians.

Annual Town Report

Kate's Annual Town Report draft looks good; ► Kate will add in CPA funds investigation, and Submit to Clerk.

540 MA Ave.

We recommended the developer be asked to contribute sidewalk funds, in lieu of building a sidewalk.

Update from Engineering

- Great Road – Stamski and McNarry doing permitting and design, coordinating with MA. Engineering / Corey York will attend any meetings they have with the State. Trying to complete design this winter, and construct in the spring of 2012 (either by town staff or contracted; it depends how much work is involved.)
- High Street – out of 22 letters (preliminary design) sent in ~October, 5-6 back. 2-3 are against the project. Could use our (sidewalk committee) help, to query the remainder of residents about their reactions (more specifically “shall we proceed with the final design?”) ► Leslie will ask Engineering/Corey York for a list of

residents; Kate will draft a phone script. E.g. 'We will assume design is ok, else call Engineering. '

- Taylor Road - Goldsmith Prest & Ringwall Inc. won bid to do survey and design; survey may be done before snow. Focus in on "Phase 1": Main St. to Minot to crosswalk at back side of Conant School.
- Martin Street – One or more residents of 2 Martin Street has been advocating for an 18" grass buffer between the street and the sidewalk, instead of 4 foot, which would be less than ideal for snow removal. When agreement among Engineering and Residents are reached, work could start in the spring. ► Bettina will follow up by viewing the site and discussing tradeoffs with residents.
- Summer St: survey 1/3 done. Hope to build in 2012.
- General: Dept of Transportation is becoming used to the idea that transportation does not just involve vehicles. Walkways are increasingly becoming part of overall transportation plans.

CPA (Community Preservation Act) Funds

We are investigating whether we could and should seek CPA funding for sidewalks / walkways next year. A Selectman must submit such a request. Sudbury does all their sidewalks with CPA funds, + funds from developers, with no town budget for sidewalks. Our CPA category is "recreational" as walkways. 1st possible target might be Main Street from Great Road to NARA park. Why this stretch? Probably more buy-in due to its recreational value, that it's a very public thoroughfare, serves many people, and connects a number of venues. The CPC committee administers CPA funds; project approval is done by citizens at town meeting. Cost est. of this sidewalk = \$685000?. (Base cost of a sidewalk is \$45 / foot; can range up to \$100's per foot). This sidewalk has not yet been prioritized. After asking a number of questions, Mr. Sonner stated that he is generally in favor of CPA funds for walkways, but was concerned about the selection of this particular sidewalk. Perhaps Stow St. by the new South Acton Rail station would be a better test case for Acton's use of CPA funds for walkways. A specific walkway would be a better target than just 'general walkways.' Since its not clear whether Acton already has enough funding for sidewalks that have made it through the engineering design process, it's not clear how much CPA funding is needed. We will revisit this issue in the Spring.

Sidewalk Funds

It is estimated that between \$450,000 and \$500,000 are currently available for sidewalk construction and repair. Of that number, \$225,000 is in the town Highway Department budget for fiscal year 2012, and \$132,000 (set aside from a private developer) is held by the Planning Department earmarked specifically for sidewalk construction on Great Road. None has been spent yet on construction, and, at the end of fiscal year 2012 the \$225,000 or any portion remaining will revert to free cash. Might we "save" money from a year where funds have not been used, to the next year? Dick will investigate possibilities with Steve Barrett, Acton Director of Finance.

Vote on adding Streets into Tier 2 category.

Current Sidewalk Projects, in process, are “Tier1”. Last meeting we decided upon 6 of 8 votes to move sidewalk projects into “Tier 2”, which will then be prioritized in the February meeting. These will become the next sidewalks recommended to be built, as Tier1 projects are completed. We discussed each project. (Will we discuss moving any streets OUT of tier 2? Not necessary, since we will prioritize them in February 11 meeting.) Voting ensued, by all 8 regular and alternate members of the sidewalk committee. There were no ‘nays’ or abstentions explicitly expressed, and results were derived by tallying the ‘yea’ votes. **Results summary: Only Stow St (Martin to Maple) receive enough votes to move into Tier2.** Summary of discussion, and Details of voting, follows.

- Brook St. Rerated due to connectivity changes to 70 points. 3 votes in favor (not moved into Tier2).
- Stow St (Martin to Maple). Rerated due to connectivity changes to 62. Note that its hard to predict what the train station impact will be. We have received many ‘pro’ emails and comments on this walkway. 8 votes in favor (passed / moved into Tier2).
- Stow St. (Robbins to Maple) (rerated due to connectivity changes to 57) 5 votes in favor (not moved into Tier2).
- Newtown Rd. from Simon Willard to Minuteman. Rating 75. 3 votes in favor (not moved into Tier2).
- Strawberry Hill Road (Great to Pope). Complete a loop. Enable access to Great Road. Recreational need vs. access need. No resident requests. 0 votes in favor (not moved into Tier2).
- Parker St. from Drummer to School St. High ‘loop’ connectivity for recreational use. 3 votes in favor (not moved into Tier2).

There will be a low committee member attendance at the January 11 meeting (though we should have a quorum of 4 or more. Therefore, we postponed the work to Prioritize Tier 2 roads until our February 8 meeting.

Meeting adjourned 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully, Steve Evans

Open Meeting law requires that the following must be included in the minutes:

- ✓ Date, place, time and matters discussed.
- ✓ Summaries of discussions
- ✓ List of documents used
- ✓ Decisions made
- ✓ Actions taken
- ✓ Record of all votes (yeas, nays and abstentions).
- ✓ A list of all documents and other exhibits, such as photographs, recordings, maps and presentations used by the body at the open or executive session.

Future Meetings Planned: (All at 7pm at the Acton Memorial Library Conference Room, on the second Wednesday of the month)

2012: Jan 11 Feb 8 Mar 14 Apr 11 May 9 June 13 July 11 Aug 8 Sep 12 Oct 10 Nov 14 Dec 12